(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) to (c) No. The Religious Accommodation Policy of the Government of the United States of America, as contained in Army Regulation 600-20, dated 18 March, 2008 of the US army provides for officers and soldiers to practice their religious preferences in terms of dress, food, worship etc.

Haj quota for MPs

2150. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:
SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all Members of Parliament have been given quota to recommend two persons for Haj;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether all MPs utilize this every year;

(d) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, MP-wise;

(e) whether Government would increase the Haj quota of MPs from 2 to at least 25 per year who represent the constituency where ratio of Muslim population is higher; and

(f) if so, the details and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) Yes. Each Member of Parliament can recommend two persons for Haj.

(c) and (d) No. Not all MPs utilize it every year. However, the requests received are given due consideration.

(e) and (f) No. At present there is no proposal for increasing the Haj quota of MPs from 2 to 25 per year since the overall quota allocated by Saudi Government to India is based on the Muslim population of the country. The quota made available is accordingly distributed among various States in proportion to the Muslim population there.

Haj quota for States

2151. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any plan to increase Haj quota to those States or areas where Muslim population is comparatively more concentrated;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) to (c) Currently, the Haj quota is distributed among various States in the ratio of their Muslim population based on 2001 census. As such, the States where the concentration of Muslim population is more get more quota than the States where the concentration of Muslim population is less.

Construction work on Tipaimukh dam

†2152. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bangladesh has asked India to stall construction work at Tipaimukh dam until its Parliamentary Committee visits the site;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reactions of Government to remarks made by the Bangladeshi water experts to the effect that construction of dam unilaterally is a violation of the Ganga Water Treaty; and

(d) the steps taken so far by Government against this reservation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) to (d) In response to requests from the Bangladesh Government, Government has shared information on the Tipaimukh project with the Government of Bangladesh and have invited a Bangladesh Parliamentary Delegation to visit India to discuss the issues. Government are aware of reports indicating varied opinions in Bangladesh on the Tipaimukh project and remains ready to clarify issues whenever necessary.

Rehabilitation of Sikhs in Pakistan

†2153. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of Sikh families displaced from tribal areas of Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has approached Pakistani Government for rehabilitation of Sikh families displaced from tribal areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR): (a) and (b) There have been reports about Sikh families being driven out of their homes and being subjected to Jaziya and other such impositions.

(c) and (d) On seeing such reports, the Government of India had taken up the matter with the Government of Pakistan. The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson commented in response that Sikhs living in Pakistan were Pakistani citizens and hence of no concern to India. He also

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.